

“Working collaboratively with academic staff to assist international students at risk”

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Abstract

The Bachelor of Commerce degree has the largest onshore international student intake of the degrees offered at the University of South Australia (UniSA).

At UniSA the International Support staff and the Program Director for this program collaborate and conduct together short appointments with the international students.

The aim of these weekly short appointments is to provide academic advice from the Program Director and contact with the International Student Adviser. International support staff would raise awareness and recommend student support services that included language and learning advice, counselling for personal issues impacting the students study as well as strategic visa advice. These appointments have been effective in meeting the student needs of a large cohort where there are finite staff resources. It has provided the opportunity for academic and international support staff to share key information relating to the student. Importantly, the student has the benefit of receiving strategic collaborative academic and support advice at the one time instead of having two separate appointments.

This research is taken from 3 years of appointments from 2010 to 2012 and looks at 150 student records. It explores the correlation between the students’ academic status at the time of the appointment, the recommended actions for the student and subsequent academic outcome. This study also provides recommendations for increasing retention and improving the international student experience.

Key Words

International students, students at risk, collaboration with academics, retention, student experience, student advice, and international student support